



The Honorable Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin
2nd District, Wisconsin
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Baldwin,

This letter is submitted on behalf of Domestic Abuse Intervention Services' (DAIS) request for capital funds to assist us in our goal of building a new shelter. DAIS has a long and successful history as the primary provider of quality crisis intervention services to domestic violence victims and their children in Dane County, including operating Dane County's only emergency domestic violence shelter. Every year we have dealt with increasingly greater demands for our services, and our aging shelter has become worn and unsuitable, not only for our current clients, but for the types of services we want to provide.

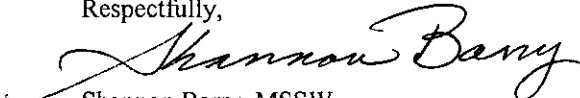
We believe this request aligns with your priority area of demonstrated needs of Wisconsin communities. You may not be aware, but Dane County has the smallest number of emergency domestic violence shelter beds per capita of any county in the entire state of Wisconsin. Indeed, for each service area across the state, the average number of people per domestic violence shelter bed is 7,500/1; in Dane County that ratio is 19,000/1! The lack of an adequate number of shelter beds coupled with the impact of the economic recession has forced DAIS to wait-list more people in 2009 than ever before in our 33 year history.

The staff and board of DAIS recognize that our community is in dire need of a new facility which will allow us to increase the number of shelter beds that we can offer, as well as permit us to expand our other support services. As the needs of our community grow, we understand that we must also grow to meet those needs. This appropriation request is part of a much larger capital campaign strategy to meet that goal. We know that immediate access to safe, emergency shelter is imperative to domestic violence victims achieving long term safety from their abusers. Many of the clients we serve describe these services as life-saving and state that if our shelter did not exist, the consequences for them could be severe, including possible homelessness, on-going abuse, or even death. National research suggests that leaving an abusive relationship is often the most dangerous time for a domestic violence victim and that victims are six times more likely to be killed by their abusers when attempting to separate than at any other time in the relationship. In fact, in 2009, all of the domestic violence homicide victims in Dane County had separated or were attempting to separate from their abusers. At DAIS, we don't want any person to have to make a life or death decision because of a lack of domestic violence services.

I invite you to come and tour our shelter at any time to gain a first hand experience of the needs facing the people we serve.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for all that you do to support Wisconsin's most vulnerable citizens.

Respectfully,


Shannon Barry, MSSW
Executive Director